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IMR Wilderness Fellows Proposal (FY2011)

Statement of Purpose

The Intermountain Region Wilderness Executive Committee (WEC) is seeking support to run the Wilderness Fellows Program in FY2011. The IMR WEC set the following goal as their highest priority: The concept of Wilderness Character is adopted by all parks with wilderness resources in the Intermountain Region, and these parks have completed wilderness character assessments by 2014, the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. To move toward that goal, the WEC wants to place 3-5 fellows in parks in 2011 to assist parks with developing wilderness character narratives, selecting measures and collecting baseline data, and initiating wilderness stewardship planning. The strategy is to build on the success of the 2010 Wilderness Fellows program initiated by the Wilderness Stewardship Division, WASO, in which 2 fellows served in 3 IMR parks. The Wilderness Fellows Program serves as an intake program for a diverse pool of new NPS professionals and advance stewardship of NPS resources.

Recruitment of eager and qualified wilderness fellows will be pursued through the NPS Cooperative Ecosystem Study Units and partnerships with universities, and/or the Student Conservation Association. Fellows would be placed in parks and provided with housing.

Wilderness Fellows will be directly associated with and assist advancing ongoing Wilderness Character Integration Team (WCIT) efforts. Primary duties are anticipated to include developing and refining a wilderness character assessments, creating a public outreach plan to meet environmental compliance requirements, developing inventory and monitoring strategies for a suite of indicators directly related to the wilderness character of the area in question, and assisting the wilderness stewardship planning point person with other duties directly related to the wilderness stewardship planning process. In addition, NPS may pay tuition for Fellows first class in the Wilderness Management Distance Education Program at University of Montana so Fellows will qualify for SCEP position at conclusion of their Fellowship.

Background

The Wilderness Stewardship Division developed Together Wild, a park-centric and collaborative approach to wilderness stewardship planning designed to help parks complete wilderness stewardship plans. The program involves SCA interns, or Wilderness Fellows, recruited from top schools, and an initial group of six were deployed to participating parks this summer. They were brought together in Everglades National Park in July, 2010, to participate in a wilderness stewardship planning workshop led by Dr. Peter Landres, Ecologist at the Aldo Leopold Institute and leader of “Keeping it Wild: An Interagency Strategy for Monitoring and Preserving Wilderness Character,” and IMR Regional Wilderness Coordinator Suzy Stutzman. In Intermountain Region, Guadalupe Mountains National Park is hosting Christina Mills, and El Malpais National Monument hosted Emily Bisecker, who also provided some work for Bandelier National Monument.

Proposed Budget

Line Item	Unit(s)	Unit Cost	Total Cost
6-month Wilderness Fellowships. Includes training and travel costs, overhead, SCA fees, etc.	4 (Fellows)	\$17,000	\$68,000
Training session (3-days) in conjunction with the Zion Wilderness Character Forum, March 29 – Apr 1, 2010 or training in conjunction with other NPS wilderness fellows	4	\$1,000	\$4,000

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throughout NPS			
Professional development training (coursework at U of Montana to assist with using this as a segue to SCEP appointment at conclusion of Wilderness Fellowship	4 (Courses)	\$1000	\$4,000
Program manager travel/misc. expenses	1	\$3,000	\$3,000
Housing – to be paid by sponsoring park			
TOTAL ESTIMATED PROJECT COST			\$79,000

Oversight

The IMR Wilderness Fellows Program will be managed by IMR Wilderness Coordinator Suzy Stutzman, in coordination with the parks that host the fellows, and with the Wilderness Stewardship Division, WASO. Contact suzy_stutzman@nps.gov, (303) 987-6671.